

4-9-2020

The Bison, April 9, 2020

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison>

Recommended Citation

The Bison, April 9, 2020. (2020). Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/thebison/1940>

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Special Collections at Scholar Works at Harding. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Bison by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works at Harding. For more information, please contact scholarworks@harding.edu.



ADMINISTRATION ASKS STUDENTS NOT TO RETURN FOR PERSONAL BELONGINGS, STUDENTS ADJUST

written by Mrichardson1 April 9, 2020



Graphic by Darrian Bagley

At the end of last week, students were informed via email that Harding was suspending the retrieval of personal belongings from dorms for the time being. Over the last few weeks, students have been signing up for times to return to campus and vacate their living spaces. For now, however, students who have not retrieved their belongings will have to wait a while longer, Zach Neal, assistant vice president of student life, said in the email.

"We are cautious and deliberate with each step made in this process," Neal said in the email. "With an increase of shelter in place restrictions nationwide, University leadership feels it is time to suspend the retrieval of belongings. In the meantime, please rest assured that your belongings remain secure behind a locked door in a locked residence hall."

Neal apologized for the difficulties this may cause and encouraged students who have extenuating circumstances to email the Office of Student Life.

The move-out process has looked more different this year than ever before. Some students collected their belongings in the last few weeks before the University suspended the process.

“Normally, moving out provides a sort of closure at the end of the school year,” senior Abigail Curtis said. “This year, though, it was pretty jarring. There weren’t hugs and goodbyes from friends as we went our separate ways for the summer. It was just me and my parents in the empty dorm, loading the car in the rain.”

Before this week, some students traveled multiple hours to retrieve decorations, clothes and possessions from their rooms. However, roommates are the one thing a suitcase is not big enough for. Junior Olivia Nutt lived in Pryor Hall and noted the difficulty of being separated from her roommates.

“The distance from my roommates has been the hardest part about all of this for me, as I am sure for many others,” Nutt said. “The fact of the matter is that I couldn’t care less about where it is that I am, as long as I am living with them.”

Roommates and friends are now on opposite ends of the country, and some may never get the chance to live together again. This is the case for junior Sam Westbrook, who lived in Graduate Hall.

“Being away from my roommates has been hard,” Westbrook said. “We used to hang out all the time, and since being long distance, we haven’t talked as much. They are all seniors, so I won’t be able to room with them again.”

When students move out at the end of the year, resident assistants (RA) are usually responsible for thorough room inspections and procedures for the students living on their halls. However, the normal responsibilities of an RA do not apply this spring semester. Junior Jackson Duncan was an RA for Allen Hall and said he noticed how different moving out was for him this semester.

“RAs move out just as every other student in the dorm would,” Duncan said. “We cleaned out everything, filled out a sheet and turned in the room key. No one actually inspected anything.”

Before moving out was postponed, students communicated directly with their residence life coordinators (RLC) instead of first contacting the RAs. Kara Chalenburg, RLC for Searcy Hall, communicated with her residents via email, Google Forms and Remind 101 text messages.

“We still have office hours, and we are still answering phone calls,” Chalenburg said. “We still communicate with our students. We are still here for everybody. Everyone is just trying to find a new normal.”

For now, students who have not moved out of dorms are asked to stay away until being told otherwise. Neal said students would be communicated with on a weekly basis regarding the future plans to retrieve their belongings.

CAMPUS RESOURCES REFORMAT TO STILL BE AVAILABLE REMOTELY

written by Audrey Jackson April 9, 2020



Life Off Campus

Graphic by Darrian Bagley

Since on-campus classes and activities were canceled about a month ago, many students now find themselves completing the semester at home. Luckily, many on-campus resources are still readily accessible online. Whether students need a tutor, a mock interview, counseling or library access, the Harding staff wants to help.

One of the largest resources available is the Brackett Library. With an online catalog of over 180 databases, students can access a variety of topics. If the online database does not have what is needed, students may fill out a form for an interlibrary loan; the library staff will scan articles and book chapters from the material collection. Students can access these forms and databases on the library website. Jean Waldrop, library director, said several jobs were reallocated to provide scanning requests.

“We had 68 requests come in over a period of three days where students needed chapters from their textbooks,” Waldrop said. “The library staff first looked to see if we could purchase a copy in e-book format that provided unlimited users. If that was not available, then we contacted publishers if needed for copyright permission, and then

provided digital copies.”

The writing center has also been reformatted to provide online support. Nathan Henton, writing center director, said student workers are now taking online appointments, which can be scheduled through the writing center tab on the Harding website. Follow the link for scheduling appointments, create a free account and select one of the available 30-minute time slots. The only change is using a video platform instead of meeting in person.

“Whenever it says that we’re open [on the website], whatever those hours, somebody is sitting at a terminal or somewhere waiting on somebody to say, ‘Hey, I need help,’ and we’re all over it,” Henton said.

For classwork beyond writing, Academic Resource Services provides tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI) and academic coaching. Students can submit peer-to-peer tutoring requests through Pipeline under the campus services tab and schedule appointments via email following request approval. For information on SI and academic coaching, students are encouraged to email the Academic Resource Services office.

Students preparing for internships and jobs after graduation are not alone either; the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) is available online for mock interviews, resume revisions, job searches and graduate school applications. The CPE social media pages contain information on possible internships and job openings, and students can schedule mock interviews or appointments through the center’s Handshake profile.

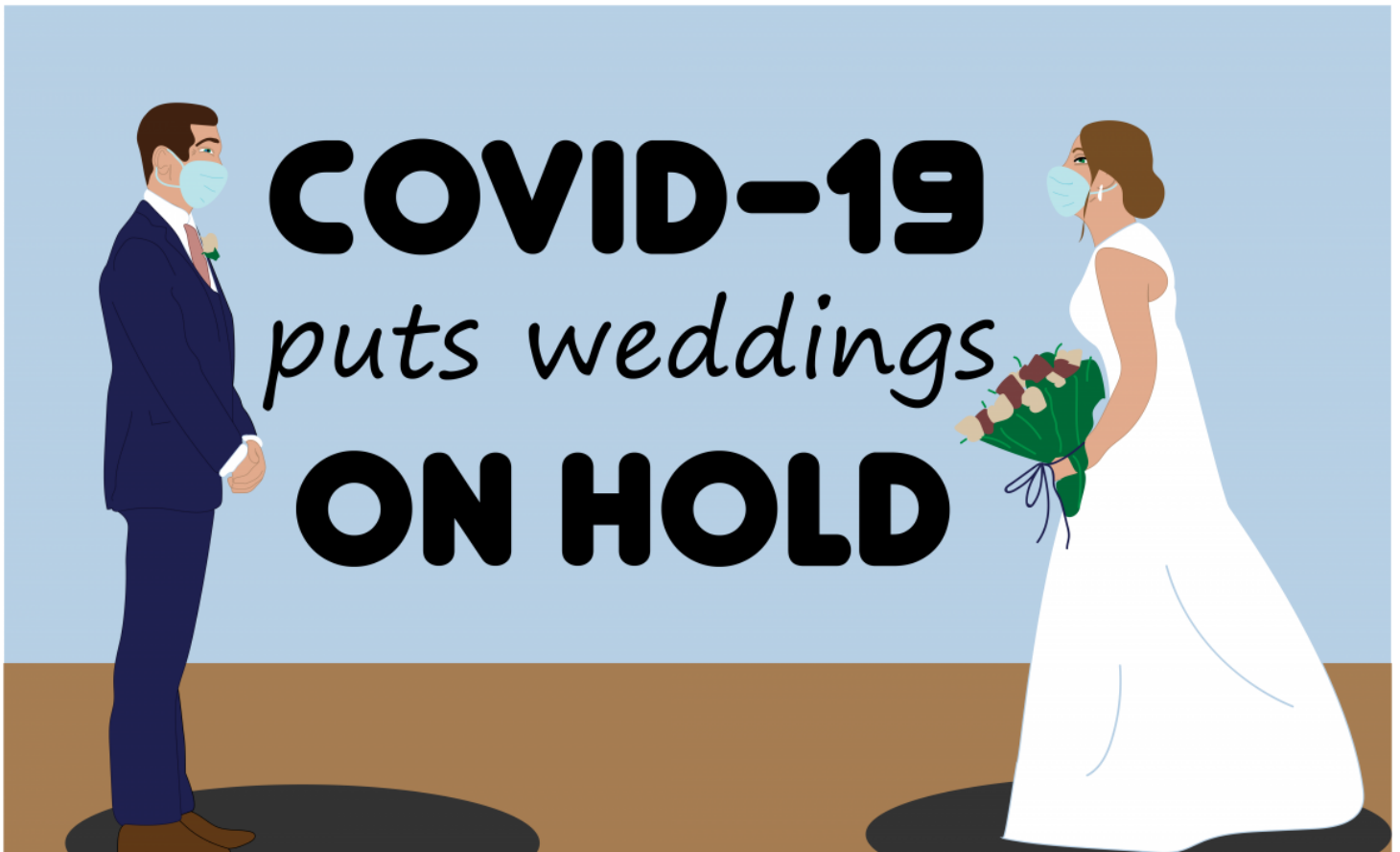
“My concern would be with students being new to working remotely,” CPE Director Brian Harrington said. “Students will need to be more diligent in checking email during this time. We realize many students are feeling anxious about the current situation, and we are here to help.”

For students who are stressed, anxious or just in need of a conversation, the Counseling Center now offers appointments in a telehealth format. Life can be uncertain right now, but there are resources to help. The center’s email address and phone number are located

under the student life tab on the Harding website, as well as a list of supplemental helplines and websites.

COVID-19 AFFECTS SPRING, SUMMER WEDDINGS

written by Selbybailey April 9, 2020



Graphic by Avery Tillet

COVID-19 has significantly affected wedding ceremonies, forcing couples in the United States and around the globe to alter their wedding plans. However, some couples have come to peace with the inevitable changes.

Some couples have proceeded with their weddings in the presence of close friends and family members thanks to the evolving restrictions on group gatherings. Others may have already announced that they are moving their date back. Still others are getting married at courthouses with plans to have a reception at the end of the virus's havoc.

Seniors Emma Taylor and Tyson Forkner were planning to marry this June in upstate New York, but due to the health and safety issues of people traveling to the hotspot that New York has turned into, they aren't sure how their plans will change.

Taylor said they considered moving the wedding to Arkansas, where more people could attend, but her dad is a doctor serving on the frontlines against the coronavirus and can't take the time off to travel as of now. The two plan to keep their original wedding date in the calendar and then have another celebration later on.

"For a while, I thought, 'No, I'm just getting married once, and I don't want to think about planning a whole other ceremony,'" Taylor said.

However, she said she started to think about how sad she has felt missing other people's weddings and realized she wanted to give friends and family the chance to celebrate with her and Forkner.

"People always say your wedding is about you, but you wouldn't invite other people if it wasn't about them," Taylor said.

Junior Abigail Curtis said she and her fiancé, junior Nick Simpson, are getting married in August no matter what happens, but being able to have the wedding ceremony is contingent upon people quarantining themselves and following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines of social distancing. Since their wedding is much later in the summer, she said they're waiting to see if any changes will be necessary.

"I have a worst-case scenario mindset," Curtis said. "Hopefully, we can do what we've been planning for, but if not, I'll just be grateful that we get to get married anyway."

Unlike the potential plans of Curtis and Taylor, seniors Carlee Freeman and Carson Gentry aren't planning on having a separate reception when things go back to normal due to their work schedules that will start soon afterward.

Because current CDC guidelines suggest no gatherings of more than 10 people, and their wedding is in May, Freeman said they might not be able to get married at the venue they had originally planned.

"We may just get married in someone's backyard," Freeman said. "Our immediate family is a lot more than 10 people."

Couples all around the globe are experiencing feelings of disappointment as COVID-19 changes an event oftentimes planned months in advance. However, life will go on, as Freeman said.

"It's sad that what you planned for isn't going to happen, but we still need to make the best of it — it's worth it," Freeman said. "We'll have a good story to tell our kids later."

'DIFFERENT AND EMPTY:' STUDENTS STILL AT HARDING REFLECT ON THE QUIET CAMPUS

written by Ryangallagher April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Sydney Bryant

Over spring break, Harding students were informed of the decision to not return to campus. Although some students have returned to campus to gather their belongings, many are now scattered across the world, leaving campus much emptier than it usually is in April. Some students, however, are still living on Harding's campus due to personal situations, leaving them to adjust to a campus much quieter than normal.

Students were not given a definitive list of acceptable reasons to stay on campus, but instead were told to contact Student Life if they believed their situation constituted a need to remain. Some chose to stay due to their families' health situations. A few remained on campus to continue internship work still going on. Others are international students unable to return home yet. Whatever the matter may be, Harding has permitted approximately 50 students to remain on campus for the time being.

Housing restrictions for students currently living in the dorms have tightened up with a 9 p.m. curfew and no grace period. To stay out for the night, students must request permission 24 hours in advance. Card access has only been permitted to the students who officially remain in the building, and former residents no longer have access.

To accommodate these students, the Charles White Dining Hall remains open. Senior Sean-Alex Smith remained in Searcy to continue his work with a local church, and he has been eating in the cafeteria more often than he previously did. He said he's been pleasantly surprised.

"I have been going to the caf because I already paid for it, but the caf has been, like, the best caf I have ever had," Smith said. "That food has been the best food I have ever had at Harding."

Senior Addison Moulton decided to stay on campus due to lack of internet access at home. She said she has also been satisfied with the accommodations on campus. However, she said Harding has been starting to lose some of its typical charm.

"It has some of a Harding feel, but I would say it definitely feels different and empty," Moulton said. "I would say a lot of the Harding feel is gone."

Staying busy on campus has been a hard task for sophomore Sydney Bryant, who remained at Harding to protect members of her family from the potential of getting sick. She said the unexpected change in schedule has left her with too much time on her hands.

"I have viewed this as an opportunity to catch up on schoolwork, which I don't have a lot of, thankfully," Bryant said. "But also at the same time, it's like, 'Wow, if I did have schoolwork, I would have something to do.'"

Bryant said dorm life feels different since she is one of the only students in the dorm.

"The first couple of nights I was here I would definitely say it was an eerie feeling knowing I was behind locked doors, but at the same time being the only one here on this hallway, on this floor, was a little weird," Bryant said.

Without most of the students, campus is certainly a different environment than usual. Smith, Moulton and Bryant agreed that Harding feels empty without everyone else. Since all summer courses have also been moved online, it will be a bit longer until the dorms are filled again.

HARDING ALUMNUS AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST TAKES ON 'TIGER KING' MYSTERY

written by Emily Nicks April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Jerry Mitchell and Facebook

Jerry Mitchell is in the business of finding the truth. After watching the wildly popular show “Tiger King,” his sights are set on a new mystery: the disappearance of Don Lewis.

Lewis disappeared from his Florida home in 1997. As a millionaire and private owner and breeder of exotic animals, Lewis made waves in the media at the time of his disappearance. The mystery of Lewis’s disappearance recently made its way back into the public eye after being featured in the Netflix documentary series “Tiger King,” which is currently the No.1 show on Netflix in the U.S.

Throughout his career, Harding University alumnus Mitchell’s work has brought about the conviction of five murderers many years after the crimes, most recently with serial killer Felix Vail in 2016. Mitchell said “Tiger King” piqued his interest in another cold case, especially when one of the subjects stated that such mysteries don’t get solved.

“[Doc Antle] opens by saying you can’t solve 20-year-old murder cold cases, you know, and I thought, ‘Well, I’ve worked on some.’ So I thought, ‘Oh, maybe I’ll take this on,’” Mitchell said.

At the end of episode two and throughout the rest of the season, “Tiger King” primarily sets up Lewis’ former wife, Carole Baskin, as the prime suspect in his disappearance. Throughout the show, numerous people speculate that she instigated foul play — with the leading theory being that she fed him to their privately owned tigers.

Mitchell said he was keeping in mind that speculation is not necessarily truth, and there is a difference between journalism and entertainment.

"I haven't totally researched the whole thing, but there are things that I would have done as a journalist and included or not included ... like people just kind of speculating or giving theories," Mitchell said. "It wasn't like a person saw it — it just kind of got put out there as a presumption. As a journalist, I would hesitate going down that road."

Mitchell said since the case has gained so much attention recently, it may be hard to reach certain people in the beginning, like Baskin and Lewis's family members. However, he said he already started the search and has found some information.

"You just begin to try to assemble whatever material you can that did exist and then names of potential witnesses, et cetera, and begin talking to them, and so I've started doing that," Mitchell said. "I've already talked to a couple of potential witnesses, I guess you could say. Well one, definitely, and then the other one is a maybe. It's interesting just to kind of begin to piece things together."

Sophomore Jenna Akins said "Tiger King" caught her interest because of how bizarre it is. She said each character brings their own kind of craziness, but she wondered if some of the elements may have been blown out of proportion.

"I think that, like most reality-type shows, the producers had to make things seem more interesting to keep the viewers' attention," Jenna said. "Though, you can only make so much stuff up. I do not think it was fair in how they portrayed people like Carol for being a possible murderer and possibly feeding her husband to a tiger; even Carol herself was upset about that."

The entertainment factor of "Tiger King" caught junior Jared Akins' attention, too, and he said he's excited that a Harding alumnus will be searching for the truth, though challenging.

"I think it's cool that Harding is playing a role in this massive story," Jared said. "I don't think it's too late, but feel like finding the truth will be a very tough task for Jerry Mitchell to do, given the situation."

Mitchell released his book "Race Against Time" earlier this year, and he was going to visit Harding after spring break as part of his book tour. Since on-campus classes and activities were canceled, Mitchell has been rescheduled to speak to Harding as an ASI lecturer on Sept. 8.

A LETTER TO THE PROFESSORS ALSO LEARNING TO SWIM

written by Emily Nicks April 9, 2020



Graphic by Darrian Bagley

To our professors, teachers and instructors:

First of all, thank you.

Thank you for trying your best during this strange time. As we, the students, grapple with our emotions regarding the end of a year and an unknown future, you are doing the same thing. Like us, you are balancing your feelings with your responsibilities, trying to figure out how to move forward, how to make it work, how to find motivation to keep going.

Thank you for watching YouTube tutorials, scheduling Zoom session after session, learning totally new technology and means of communication. You didn't sign up for eight weeks of mandatory professional development, but you're doing it anyway. Thank you.

Secondly, we apologize.

We are sorry for the bad attitudes we are tempted to have toward you. As we struggle through the challenges and confusion, we long for someone to blame. Anger is sometimes an easier emotion to feel than sadness, and you are an easy target for it. We're sorry — this is hardly ever fair.

We apologize for our expectations that you should have all of this figured out already. Deep down, we know it is unreasonable for us to think you will be able to seamlessly transition to online instruction with no hiccups, just as it is unreasonable for us to transition to this new normal effortlessly.

Finally, we ask that you keep working with us.

We know that you must be tempted to get annoyed with us, and we know that sometimes, we bring that on ourselves. Other times, it is just the circumstances. Many of you have already been gracious and willing to work with us through the technical difficulties. You've extended deadlines, been patient with bad internet connections, and asked for our input. Thank you for this, and please continue to show us this kindness.

If you are one of the teachers who begins each virtual class with asking how we are handling everything, please don't stop. The answer to "How are you?" changes honestly from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour. Some of you respond to our deadline extension emails asking if everything is OK. Are we safe? Are we healthy? Those questions mean everything to us. Keep asking them — or, if you haven't begun, please start. It's never too late.

Yes, we feel distant from you after being used to seeing you every day in person. It's hard; it's sad. However, at the same time, professors and students have never been more connected than we are now. Never before have our teachers been learning so much at the same time we are. Never before have we all been feeling so many similar emotions, fears and uncertainties.

We are in a new type of community now, and there's something hopeful about that.

We hope to see you in person sometime soon. Until then, we'll see you onscreen and in the inbox. We're all learning to swim right now, and sometimes it feels like we're drowning. But we know almost every single one of you is there for us in these rough waters. For that, we are grateful.

MOURNING AND DANCING: YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER

written by Madisonscott April 9, 2020



Opinion

Graphic by Darrian Bagley

"I ate the best strawberry today. I mean, I don't even like strawberries, but this one was the best."

My friend's words struck me the instant they fell from her mouth. For whatever reason, these simple sentences are the ones that have stuck with me since talking with her a week ago.

In my Bible class earlier this semester, we were reading through Ecclesiastes. For many, this book can be seen as one of the more depressing books in the Bible. The author writes that everything is meaningless — "a chasing after the wind." However, as I was reading chapter 3 a couple months ago, it struck a chord within me and felt directly applicable to events going on in that time of my life, and even more so now.

Solomon said, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." He goes on to name several: a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep silent and a time to speak.

Since being homebound during this pandemic, I'm sure I am not alone in having a lot of time: to think, to pray, to reflect, and to not think, to not pray, to not reflect. In the moments when I have been able to reflect and process, I am reminded of something that has always been true but is merely sharpened and heightened now: In any season of life, you can either drive yourself insane, wishing things to be something that they are not, or you can sink into what is.

As a human — a controlling, doubtful human — I will sometimes do anything it takes to manipulate a situation to be what I think it should be; this practice is not even always deliberate, but almost subconscious and second-nature a lot of the time. I tend to believe that if something does not make me feel good, then it cannot be right.

"A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance."

A pattern I see a lot within the Christian community is a pursuit of the "laughing" or "dancing" seasons rather than the others. This makes perfect sense; we are creatures of comfort, and I don't know if it is just me, but it sometimes feels as if there is palpable guilt when we have to talk about the darker parts of life. The weeping and mourning are seen as a means to get us to the laughing and the dancing, rather than truly pursuing the Lord.

Earlier this year, my Bible professor mentioned how appealing it is to read through passages like this or the psalms and highlight the cheerful verses. These are the parts we feel like we are supposed to resonate with, but it is so much rarer that we feel compelled to emphasize the verses where David or Solomon are pleading with God, mourning countless hardships.

I am immensely encouraged by Ecclesiastes 3, especially during these times, because I am reminded that I serve a God who does not shy away from the hard stuff and a God who is equally present in the messiness of this earth as he is in the manageable. There is a season for everything under heaven and a time for every matter. I want to adopt these words as my personal mantra, because with this in mind, we can fully rest and chase a relationship with our heavenly Father rather than good feelings. After all, if we laughed all the time, we would not understand the beauty and significance of it; we would not understand the difference between the weeping and the laughing. You simply cannot have one without the other; the one does not exist without the other.

In this season of wreckage and hurt, both physical and emotional, you do not have to choose between blind optimism or crippling pessimism. There is a middle ground, and here lies truth and growth. May this be a time when we are not afraid to let the two dance alongside each other. May we not hesitate to get on our knees and pray on the behalf of those most vulnerable right now; likewise, may we also not shy away from recognizing and embracing the silver linings that come from slowing down and having our plans changed, like breathing in fresh air on a walk to the mailbox; or having more in common with our neighbors now than we did a few weeks ago; or baking, resting, reading or eating a really good strawberry.

'ONWARD' MOVIE REVIEW

written by Danielle Turner April 9, 2020



Lifestyle

Graphic by Darrian Bagley

The newest movie from Disney Pixar Studios, “Onward,” was released in theaters March 6. Just short of one month after its premiere — and due to the current global health crisis and closure of movie theaters across the nation — Disney uploaded the movie to its online streaming service, Disney+, April 3. “Onward” has a star-studded cast, including Tom Holland, Chris Pratt, Julia Louis-Dreyfuss and Octavia Spencer voicing some of the main characters of the film. The movie is a beautiful blend of magic and mundane and celebrates brotherhood in a heartwarming way.

“Onward” takes place in a fantasy world full of elves, centaurs, unicorns and other mythical creatures. Magic used to be the primary way of life, but their society has fallen to the convenience of technology; the magic faded away over the years. The story follows two elves who live in this fantasy world: Ian (voiced by Tom Holland) and his older brother, Barley (voiced by Chris Pratt), who receive a magical staff on Ian’s 16th birthday, which is meant to bring their father back from the dead for 24 hours. When Ian and Barley mess up the spell, they set out on a quest to right what went wrong and see their father.

Per Pixar standard, the movie is beautifully animated, and the story is well-written. While it's not the best Pixar film I've seen (shoutout to "Inside Out" and "Ratatouille"), it is still a great movie and definitely worth watching. "Onward" has a lot to say about nontraditional families and gaining courage in the face of the unknown. Ian begins the story as a shy, unsure teenager, but along the quest, he finds his voice and learns to advocate for himself. Ian and Barley's mother (voiced by Julia Louis-Dreyfus) is a single mother who will sacrifice anything for her children — even befriending a mythical "Manticore" and learning how to wield a sword like the mighty warrior she is.

The animation seems to resemble that of both Disney's "Zootopia" and Disney Pixar's "Monsters University" as Pixar stitches together another new universe in beautiful blues and purples. With mushrooms for houses but gas stations on every corner, the blurred lines between magic and mundane are showcased once again.

One of my favorite aspects of the movie was Barley's obsession with the card game "Quests of Lore." The game is very reminiscent of Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), and he is obsessed with it like many D&D players are in the real world. With so many D&D groups popping up all around Harding's campus, I found it entertaining to watch a little bit of that culture play out in "Onward."

Overall, I loved "Onward" and everything it stands for. It's a movie about adventure and family and looking around to see the blessings you already have. Stay in conduct with social distancing guidelines, but if you can, gather your family and watch this together. Your younger siblings will thank you.

SENIOR CULTIVATES CONVERSATIONS IN NEW PODCAST

written by Abigailrezentes April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Kayley Underwood

What do you get when you mix a lot of unexpected free time with a passion project? For senior Kayley Underwood, the answer is some good conversations — particularly, “Christlike Conversation,” a podcast she officially launched March 17.

Underwood said the inspiration for the interview-style podcast came from various conversations she's had with friends over the years. She said she first had the idea during the fall semester of 2019, and her father was able to help her finalize and set up the technical side of it.

"We set that up, and I wrote down kind of the whole theme in February," Underwood said. "Then it just kind of became a matter of who I wanted to interview at that point, so I was just brainstorming what are the kinds of conversations we wanted to have and what exactly that looks like."

Underwood said a key point of having interviews in her podcast was to make sure it took the spotlight off her. She said she believes the content should focus on the conversations and the interviewee rather than herself and her own opinions.

"I didn't want my podcast to just be me talking all the time; I knew that I struggled enough with pride as it is," Underwood said. "I knew that if I was interviewing other people, that puts me in a more humble position, and other people have a lot that I can learn from."

Underwood interviewed Harding alumna Erin Hasler for the episode titled "Be Still and Know." Hasler said she has known Underwood for many years, and she has seen how Underwood has grown. Hasler said that together the two have had many in-depth spiritual conversations just like the episode she is featured on, so she was excited to be a part of the podcast.

"Kayley is a very genuine person, and she's very interested in what people think and what their views are," Hasler said. "So I think it's very cool that she's doing this podcast, because it's very true to who she is."

Junior Jamey Fischer, another good friend of Underwood, said Underwood would always want to have deep conversations with people to learn more about them and their points of view.

"She's always looking for a good conversation about God," Fischer said.

Fischer said these conversations open doors and allow for both personal and spiritual growth.

"She mentioned to me that she feels like Christlike conversations is something that is very important in growing our relationships with God through each other," Fischer said. "So I feel like based on her own personal need, where she felt the need to grow some more, she made this podcast to help other people do that as well."

Underwood explained the inspiration behind the podcast's title, and why it was important to her.

"You know, when I was thinking about titles, I was hesitant to put Christ in the title," Underwood said. "But that is what I ultimately want to be known for, is how I portray him and how he lives through me, so I felt like that was very important to include in the title, because if Christ is my identity, he needs to be forefront in all things."

"Christlike Conversations" can be found on most podcast sites including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Anchor and more.

SMALL BUSINESSES GET CREATIVE DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

written by Madisonscott April 9, 2020



Photo by Valerie LaFerney

Over the course of several weeks, COVID-19 created unpredictable changes for the everyday processes of thousands of small businesses across the nation and world.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as of April 3, 24% of small businesses had temporarily shut down in response to COVID-19, and 43% believed they had less than six months until a permanent shutdown was unavoidable.

While these numbers might seem daunting, businesses — both local to Searcy and beyond — have created additional ways for people to support their businesses in this time.

The Natural Food Store in Searcy started making its own hand sanitizer with aloe vera gel, alcohol and essential oils to sell in response to the virus.

“We made it to fill the need we saw, and it has sold like crazy,” junior Cassie Weaver, an employee at the store, said. “It works great and smells really good too.”

Weaver said the store is open normal hours but is encouraging people to take advantage of curbside pickup and home delivery options. She said what is most helpful to the business during this time is for customers to continue doing their regular grocery shopping with them and choose to get immune support items there, as well.

In response to the virus, several local Searcy businesses, such as Midnight Oil, Burrito Day and Wild Sweet Williams, have partnered with Sunday Cool, a screen printing and design company, to create T-shirts.

“They decided to partner with many different small businesses to generate some extra revenue in this difficult time,” senior Valerie LaFerney, an employee at Midnight Oil, said. “They are taking orders for custom shirts, printing them, shipping them and then splitting the proceeds with the local business. They set it up to be extremely easy for local businesses to partner with them.”

LaFerney said orders will be available until April 15, and then they will be shipped to their owners.

In addition to figuring out how to stay afloat as a business, senior Emma Grace Taylor, an employee at Burrito Day, said this local restaurant has also been attentive to ways they could help their employees and community.

Taylor said when Burrito Day decided they needed to temporarily close their doors, they were mindful of their employee. They offered any leftover food to their staff and also extended the offer to people in their community who they knew could benefit from it.

“They’ve done a really good job handling it that way by being cautious and also really caring for us,” Taylor said.

Aside from purchasing a shirt or product specific to the coronavirus outbreak, small business employees shared additional ways for anyone to help out.

“I personally am supporting small businesses right now by being mindful of ways I can contribute to their needs and praying for their owners and workers,” Weaver said.

Weaver said she continues to buy coffee and food from places that are still open for to-go orders.

“We have been seeing people buy gift cards, and that is a great way to support a small business right now,” LaFerney said. “We have also seen people tipping very generously. Others have made a point to thank us for being there and having a smile on our faces. All of those little things really make a difference.”

LaFerney said it is also important that — if you do support a small business and buy a to-go order — to be considerate and cautious of the employees and others around you to maintain as safe of an environment as possible.

“I hope we are all thinking about how we can support the small businesses near us at this time,” Weaver said.

LaFerney said she has been encouraged by the number of people who have continued to support Midnight Oil and other local businesses. She said that these businesses create a sense of comfort for many people, and, if anything, they can provide a pick-me-up throughout this season.

STUDENT CREATES QUARANTINE SPIRIT WEEK, BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

written by Darcysandford April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Everett Kirkman and Brian Hicks

When Sophomore Everett Kirkman looked around at the state of the world on Saturday, March 28, she decided there needed to be something to keep everyone's spirits up; thus quarantine spirit week was born and held from March 29 to April 3.

Kirkman wanted to spread some positivity and thought a spirit week was the perfect way to bring a little joy into people's lives. She said she was inspired by high school spirit weeks, for which she had always loved to go all out in silly costumes. Quarantine spirit week was her way to find joy during a time of uncertainty.

Quarantine spirit week consisted of a unique theme for each day: skater Sunday, monochromatic Monday, tie-dye Tuesday, wig Wednesday, 13 going on Thursday and casual Friday.

When Kirkman first had the idea, she posted about it in her social club Facebook group and on her Instagram story, in case a few close friends wanted to join. She said she had no idea the success it would be by the end of the week.

Sophomore Sierra White said she first heard about spirit week from Kirkman's Instagram story and thought it might be fun to add something different to her everyday routine.

"It [had] definitely given me something to look forward to every day, just to know that I have a reason to sort of dress up," White said. "Spirit week definitely added some flavor to this otherwise kind of boring lockdown that we have going on."

Kirkman said she has been able to see a different side of social media during this time. She has been able to see a fruitful side that brings light.

"Lately, I feel like social media has been oversaturated with people complaining, or distasteful jokes or comments, or discouraging news updates that never seem to slow down," Kirkman said. "I've felt encouraged by the positivity and light I've been able to see in my own circles."

As people liked and shared each other's posts, quarantine spirit week not only allowed people to be silly and have fun, but it also brought people together post by post.

Skater Sunday intrigued junior Brian Hicks, and he said it was fun to have a reason to be lighthearted and take pictures with friends and family.

"It is fun to be creative, and everyone should do stuff like this," Hicks said. "It's fun to be silly and have fun. It also will help us remember that we can have fun in weird times."

Sophomore Ellie Shelton also participated from day one and said she admired Kirkman for bringing good and making the best of non-ideal circumstances.

"I love waking up and watching the fashion show of creative outfits everyone came up with on Everett's Instagram story," Shelton said. "I loved the themes and the idea of the Harding community doing something together even though we can't all be together right now."

During this quarantine process, Kirkman said she hoped the week would instill purpose into people's days. The idea brought her joy, and she hoped she shared that.

STUDENTS ADJUST TO LIVING AT HOME AGAIN

written by Kaitlynfrancois April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Stevie Gidden

Four weeks into quarantine, students are slowly but surely beginning to adjust to living at home again. It can be a joy to live at home; however, it can also be emotionally taxing.

Senior Stevie Gidden went home to a family of nine. Gidden said she misses having all her friends in one place, but she is close to her family and feels like they have kept her sane in this time of chaos.

"It's been tough, especially because there hasn't been a whole lot of closure with this huge change," Gidden said. "It definitely wasn't my plan to move home this semester, but there are worse things occurring, and I am thankful that this was the only change I have had to make so far."

With nine people in one house, it can be hard to find a place to focus. To complete her work, Gidden said she goes to her room to avoid the chaos that occurs in other parts of the house. To stay on track, she also created her own daily schedule to establish a routine. Gidden said the consistency of having a routine has helped her stay focused and level headed during the quarantine.

Junior Sydney Elliot has four siblings also all in school. Unlike Gidden, though, she has not found it too taxing to do school at home with others around.

"We all tend to keep to ourselves throughout the day to get our work done, and around dinner time we all come together to talk and hang out," Elliot said.

Although Elliot said she is functioning well with her siblings, it still has been an emotional adjustment learning to live with them again. She said she is close with her sisters, but in college, she established a different type of relationship with her friends from school.

"My relationships with my close friends look different from my relationships with my family members, so it can be hard to feel like I can't talk about certain things that I would have at school," Elliot said.

While students like Gidden and Elliot have returned to full houses, others are now in much quieter settings. Senior Brooklyn Moore is an only child now living at home. Moore said having so much change at once was tough, especially moving out so quickly. More so, the online classes have been one of the hardest transitions.

"I felt kind of bombarded with emails of assignments and also move-out instructions sent out all at once," Moore said. "The transition has certainly been tough, given I've never done online classes from home before."

However, Moore said moving home in the middle of the semester has given her a new perspective.

"I've really been thinking about how I should be looking at this strange, secluded time," Moore said. "I know that God is not the cause of this virus, but I think he definitely wants to take advantage of this time to grow people in different ways."

For those of faith, God is a strength and refuge. Moore said she has taken this time to see what God has been trying to reveal to her, and she encouraged others to look at it this way, too.

"My advice would be to pray and ask God what growth he wants to see in us as individuals," Moore said. "It's been a reality check for myself and has brought attention to how much I worship the opinion of others, like letting their opinions make decisions for me."

STUDENTS ADJUST TO UNCERTAIN SUMMER PLANS WITH COVID-19

written by Chantelceaser April 9, 2020



Life Off Campus

Graphic by Darrian Bagley

During the spring semester, students are normally planning for summer trips and looking for summer internships and jobs. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, planning for the future looks a little different.

Senior Becca Dahm planned to go to Guatemala for the Medical Evangelist Program (MET) through Health Talents International; then travel to New Delhi, India, with Central India Christian Missions (CICM); and finally to the region of Damoh to serve in the hospital, nursing school and children's ministry.

"My plans have now been put on hold and on the fence for each," Dahm said. "India and Guatemala have temporarily shut down their borders, causing both trips to wait until further notice."

Junior Julie Goddard is also in limbo with her summer plans. Goddard was preparing to study abroad at Harding University in Florence until all Harding summer international programs were canceled. Despite being disappointed that her plans were changed, Goddard said she is still trying to look on the bright side of things.

"I'm disappointed that my program was canceled," Goddard said. "There were going to be some amazing experiences there, but now I get to be in Searcy for the summer — be a part of my friend's wedding, save some money, possibly work on a film project and be with the people I love. Some mixed emotions for sure, but God continues to do mighty things."

Although senior Alyson White's plans were not yet set in stone, she said she is still feeling disappointment in those opportunities no longer being an option. While she said she feels worried, she is hopeful that good will come from all of this.

"Initially, I felt really worried because this puts a damper on the efforts of my entire peer group to grow in our career paths," White said. "College summers are important; they offer promises of internships and church camps and chances to gain experience. However, I'm more hopeful now that even if we'd rather be out living our lives, we can use this extra time to pursue worthwhile things we might normally put on the back burner."

While a lot of students' summers are being changed, some students' plans are still on track. Junior Amanda McDuffie will work as a youth ministry intern and said she is thrilled that the plans are still on.

"I'm excited to be a youth ministry intern for a lot of reasons," McDuffie said. "I love youth group aged kids. They're at the age, especially the high schoolers, where they're figuring out who they want to be, and as an intern I get to assist them in that journey for a short period of time. That's a big responsibility, but also such a great opportunity to point them to Jesus and the life they can live if they choose him."

Although plans are up in the air for everyone, Dahm urged students to keep an outward focus during this time as well.

"It is a privilege to wash your hands and social distance, which the people in the slums of India are not able to do," Dahm said. "Prayers are the most powerful resource that can be sent to them right now."

STUDENTS HIGHLIGHT FEMALE FEARLESS CREATORS

written by Katelynallen April 9, 2020



Photo courtesy of Macey Vaught

Harding University is filled with inventive minds and students searching for ways to express themselves through their passions and creativity. However, fear can sometimes control people who have amazing ideas, creative spirits and artistic visions. Recently, a few students noticed that in their own lives.

Seniors Ana Quintero and Macey Vaught were talking recently about how fear has held them back from pursuing their creative dreams for a long time. Quintero said she decided she was tired of fearing failure. Vaught and Quintero decided to launch a project called “Fearless Creators,” which they said provides them with the opportunity to interview women who are pursuing their creative dreams at Harding.

Quintero wanted to pursue her love of writing, so she created a blog called “What If” to serve as the medium for their project.

"I wanted [What If] to be a place that celebrates creativity and the fearless pursuit of the good that God has for us," Quintero said. "There are so many people fearlessly pursuing the things they love, and Macey and I wanted to take the time to highlight their stories, not only to encourage others, but also to encourage those fearless creators to keep doing what they're doing and hopefully bring their story to a wider audience. Fearless Creators became a way that we could put into practice what we were learning and put ourselves out there in a creative way."

Quintero said she is continuously amazed that God first introduces himself as the creator. She said she wants others to know they are made on purpose and with a purpose, created in the image of God. Vaught said she was inspired to be part of this project because Quintero simply asked her to be. Because of her love of photography, Vaught photographs the women who are part of the Fearless Creators project to provide a visual medium on the blog. She said the purpose of this blog is to encourage everyone who participates and reads.

"Although a lot of these individuals that we are interviewing already have some sort of social media presence and following, we want to not only help that grow, but to also dive deeper into their background," Vaught said. "We want to show people the why behind what they are doing, the challenges they've faced, the satisfaction that has been a result, and the advice they have for others because those things bring even more life to their creations and encouragement to others."

Vaught and Quintero are currently featuring women within the Harding community who they view as creative. They plan to expand their features to the Searcy, Conway and Little Rock communities soon. Senior Toni Sharp has been featured in the Fearless Creators project because of her small business, Toni's Clay Earrings.

"Exploring creativity in college has been many things, but for me, it has mostly been a stress reliever," Sharp said. "I have always loved creating things, whether it's sewing, painting or working with clay. I took art classes all throughout school growing up and kind of put it on hold once I got to college. My last couple of years of college, though, I decided to get back into it and found it to be a great way to clear my mind for a bit of time and relieve stress."

Sharp said a lot of creativity comes with trial and error, but she encouraged others searching for an outlet to keep trying and be positive.

"Creativity has brought so much joy to my life," Sharp said. "I thank God for the innate desire to create that he has put in us all — be it art or something else. I love sharing things I create with others, be it food or earrings, and am always blown away by people's kindness. So another thing I would say to others wanting to create but afraid to put themselves out there: Don't worry about it, [because] chances are, there will be way more people desiring to lift you up and support you in your endeavors."